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SUBJECT: NINEWA: SHABAK PUSH FOR RECONCILIATION COUNCIL AND AN END TO KURD ENCROACHMENT

Classified By: NINEWA PRT Leader James Knight: Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Team (PRT) message.

SUMMARY

I1. (C) PRT Team Leader Knight and IPAO Pope met Shabak Democratic Party (SDP) leader and Council of Representatives member Dr. Hunain Qaddo at PRT offices on FOB Marez (Mosul) 21 August 2006. Hunain proposed a major reconfiguration of de-Ba'athification efforts since he believes social peace requires reconciliation with Sunni Ba'athists. Hunain expressed alarm at Kurd encroachments in Nineva, and further proposed that a new province be carved out of eastern Nineva to protect Shabak, Yezidi, Christians, and other minorities. End summary.

DE-BA'ATHIFICATION A MISTAKE

I2. (C) Hunain criticized the Iraqi de-Ba'athification program at length, stating that the program unnecessarily made enemies of nominal Ba'athists who joined the party as a condition of employment rather than for political reasons. Noting that numbers of former Ba'athists are now serving officials of the GOI, Hunain advocated formation of a 'Reconciliation Council' similar to South Africa's post-apartheid 'Truth Commission' to identify Ba'athists who should be punished or excluded, but which could clear those who should be permitted to rejoin the political process. Similarly, Hunain proposed that dismissed former officers Iraqi Army officers (presumably cleared by his proposed commission) be granted pensions -- in addition, many could be reinstated into the new Iraqi security forces since their skills and experience are still needed.

KURDISH EXPANSIONISM RAISES TENSION

I3. (C) Hunain emphatically insisted that Kurds have tried to change the demographics of Eastern Nineva by pressuring both Shabak and Yazidi to identify themselves as Kurds. Kurds have taken control of traditional Shabak lands of the Nineva Plain to

increase Kurd numbers in the area. Hunain fears that Kurds may thus force a violent reaction from affected minorities. Similar efforts against Ninewa's Arab communities could also generate violence.

¶4. (c) Hunain also insisted that Kurds are attempting to increase their influence among minorities by providing financial support and security assistance. Militias guarding Christian and other minority communities are supported by the KRG, since neither the GOI nor Ninewa's provincial government has been willing or able to safeguard these communities. Hunain emphasized that Coalition forces must restrain the Kurds to forestall these risks.

A NEW PROVINCE FOR MINORITIES?

¶5. (C) Warming to the minorities question, Hunain noted that he had raised creation of a new province for eastern Ninewa at the Council of Representatives and with Coalition representatives. Such a new province may be necessary to protect Christians and other minorities of the Nineva Plain from both Kurds and Arabs. Hunain reported that representatives of Nineva's Christian, Shabak, and Yazidi communities have made positive initial responses. He has not yet raised the proposal with Kurd leaders, but does not believe Kurdish reaction will be favorable.

A QUICK TOUR D'HORIZON

¶6. (C) Seizing the opportunity to elaborate his views to a new audience, Hunain went on to share his views on a number of current topics. He said that while one could consider the situation in Baghdad a 'civil war', that could not be said for elsewhere in Iraq. However, Hunain is worried that such a situation could develop between Arabs and Kurds in Mosul. He noted that Shi'a leader Muqtada al-Sadr's support for PM Maliki is conditional, and only reliable to the degree Maliki supports Sadr's agenda. He opined that FinMin Jabr and IntMin Bulani are doing reasonably well. Hunain had no ready solution to ongoing anti-Coalition agitation by a few professors at the University of Mosul.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) Hunain's combative, obstreperous personality clouds most issues with which he is engaged, and it is not clear that he speaks for a significant constituency -- especially in regard to his proposal to create a new province between Nineva and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). However, his fear of Kurdish ambitions for Nineva is widely shared. Hunain's belief that former Ba'athists are behind much of the violence in Mosul is also widely shared across Nineva's political landscape, although his proposal to resolve matters with a national reconciliation commission has not been raised by other interlocutors. End comment.

KHALILZAD